

**What is campylobacteriosis?**

Campylobacteriosis is an infection caused by bacteria called Campylobacter. It affects the intestinal tract and, rarely, the bloodstream.

**Is this a new disease?**

No. Campylobacteriosis has probably been in existence for many years but has only recently been recognized as a common infection because of improved laboratory methods for its detection.

**Who gets campylobacteriosis?**

Anyone can get Campylobacter infection.

**Where is Campylobacter found and how are the bacteria spread?**

Many animals including swine, cattle, dogs, cats, and birds (particularly poultry) carry the bacteria in their intestines. These sources may contaminate meat products (particularly poultry), water supplies, milk and other foods. Campylobacter is generally spread by eating or drinking contaminated food or water and, occasionally, by contact with infected animals.

**What are the symptoms of campylobacteriosis?**

Campylobacteriosis may cause mild or severe diarrhea, often with fever and traces of blood in the stool.

**How soon after exposure do symptoms appear?**

The symptoms generally appear 2 to 5 days after the exposure.

**For how long can a person carry Campylobacter?**

Generally, infected people will continue to pass the germ in their feces (stool) for a few days to a week or more. Certain antibiotics may shorten this carrier phase.

**Do infected people need to be isolated or excluded from school or work?**

Since the organism is passed in the feces, people with diarrhea should be excluded from day care, patient care, and foodhandling. Most infected people may return to work or school when their diarrhea stops, provided that they carefully wash their hands after using the toilet and before preparing food.

**What is the treatment for campylobacteriosis?**

Most people infected with Campylobacter will recover on their own. Persons with diarrhea should drink plenty of fluids. Antibiotics are occasionally used to treat severe cases or to shorten the carrier phase, which may be important for food handlers, children in day care and health care workers. Since relapses occasionally occur, some physicians might treat mild cases with antibiotics to prevent a recurrence of symptoms.

## **How can Campylobacteriosis be prevented?**

- Always treat raw poultry, beef and pork as if they are contaminated and handle accordingly:
- Wrap fresh meats in plastic bags at the market to prevent blood from dripping on other foods.
- Refrigerate foods promptly; minimize holding at room temperature.
- Cutting boards and counters used for preparation should be washed immediately after use to prevent cross contamination with other foods.
- Avoid eating raw or undercooked meats.
- Ensure that the correct internal cooking temperature is reached -particularly when using a microwave.
- Avoid eating raw eggs or undercooking foods containing raw eggs.
- Avoid using raw milk.
- Practice careful handwashing before and after food preparation and after toileting or diapering.
- Make sure children, particularly those who handle pets, wash their hands well.